# Unpublished Letters of Presidents Add Interest to National Library Collection

By Frank G. Carpenter

**One-Third of Washington's Papers Burned—Jackson Tells in Letters of Duels He Has Fought and Race Horses He Has Run.**

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WASHINGTON, D. C., Oct. 25.—Have already told you something of the wonderful collection of manuscripts relating to American history which are now being gathered together in the manuscript division of the Library of Congress at Washington. This collection is steadily increasing, and it will soon be the largest reservoir of the raw material of history known to the world. I have spent the greater part of the week in going through the collection, and it is impossible to exaggerate its extent and value. During my visit to the library I had a most interesting chat with Gaillard Hunt, the American historian and archivist in charge of the division, about the papers of the presidents. Said he:

"The Washington papers which we now have in hand are the largest collection relating to any individual. It is larger than any collection of papers concerning any one British statesman or any famous man of any other country. Washington became famous when very young and he was a prolific letter writer. From 1775 on people began to save his letters, so that now new Washington letters are always appearing, and almost any collector of consequence has one or more Washington letters. He wrote the most of his correspondence with his own hand, and he fas so methodical that he accomplished a great lot of work. It was his habit to rise at 5 oclock every morning and to write until breakfast time. We have ourselves here, in the manuscript division, about 50,000 letters of Washington, and the collection, including the letters to him, numbers considerably over 100,000."

**Many Papers Were Sold.**

"Where did these papers come from?"

"From various sources. A great many came from his heirs. When Washington died his estate at Mount Vernon came to Gen. Bushrod Washington. Later on a number of the heirs sold the papers which they had inherited to the government. Others of the heirs kept theirs and left them at Mount Vernon, and when Mount Vernon was sold by Col. Washington, the father of Lawrence Washington, the papers were taken to Alexandria and were deposited in a bank. There must have been about a dozen barrels of them. At the opening of the civil war the papers were still there, but soon after that the bank was burned down and the papers were burned with it. This left as the only group of Washington papers the one which the government had bought. It formed about two-thirds of the whole.

**Papers of Adams and Jefferson.**

"Where are the papers of John Adams?"

"They are in the hands of the Massachusetts Historical society at Boston, where are also the papers of John Quincy Adams. They have been deposited there and will probably never leave Boston, although they really ought to be in our collection here. The Adams papers are valuable. They are in the special charge of Mr. Worthington Ford, who was formerly chief of this division. They are very carefully guarded."

"Have you many of the Jefferson papers?"

"Yes. Our collection is numbered by tens of thousands. Jefferson was very methodical, and his private papers were almost as voluminous as those of Washington. He was one of the first Americans to use a press copy, and there are thousands of letters in press copy by him. Congress bought Jefferson's library, and it was carried in wagons from Monticello to Washington. The Jefferson papers were not a part of the library. They were acquired after Jefferson's death, and were bought of his descendants for about $25,000. These papers contained a record of the whole career of Jefferson. Only about one-fifth of them have ever been published, and it is out of the question for the government to ever publish them all."

"Our Madison collection came from two separate purchases. Madison prepared certain of his papers for publication before he died, and congress bought some of these shortly after his death. Later on he bought the remainder. Then some of the papers fell into the hands of his stepson; Payne Todd, who deposited them with James G. McGuire of Washington. McGuire was a collector of manuscripts. He had loaned Todd money and Todd had given him the papers as security, and when the debt was not paid they fell into his hands. Later on the McGuire collection was sold to the Chicago Historical society, and it was only a year or so ago that I persuaded that society to sell them to us. The heads of the society were business men. They thought that the Madison collection rightly belonged to the National Library, and they gave it to us at just what it cost them. These Madison papers comprised 110 volumes, and the items in our Madison documents altogether are in theneighborhood of 50,000."

**Some Monroe Papers.**

"We have also some papers of Monroe, and some which were bought from the descendants of John Quincy Adams. Many of these have not been bound as yet. We have a large collection of documents relating to Andrew Jackson. The chief collection left by Jackson was given by Gen. Jackson's adopted son to his friend Francis P. Blair, and Blair's descendants turned them all over to the government about five years ago. In addition to this collection, there were a large number of Jackson's letters and papers in the hands of his adopted son's widow. I bought those manuscripts from her about two years ago, so that altogether we have now a remarkably complete collection of the Jackson papers. They number about 30,000 documents or items. They begin with Jackson's early youth and run on down to his death."

"How about your collection of Van Buren, Tyler and Polk?"

Van Buren did not leave a great many papers," said Mr. Hunt. "He was a very cautious man and he destroyed many of his letters. Still we have a large collection which was presented to the library about six years ago by his descendants. We have very many papers of James K. Polk which the government bought from his descendants. Polk was careful and methodical. He saved letters and papers, and we have altogether thirty or forty thousands of his documents.

"We have scattering papers of William Henry Harrison, Zach Taylor and Millard Fillmore, but we have no collections of there presidents. Thee Fillmore papers are in the custody of the Buffalo Historical society and they will probably be sent here after a while. They are not very important, but Fillmore himself was not important. He was not nearly as strong as Tyler. John Tyler was a personality. Fillmore was in many respects a momentity. As to the papers of Zachary Taylor, after his death they remained in the hands of his son on the old Taylor plantation in Louisiana. Then the house was burned down and all the papers destroyed. The papers of William Henry Harrison were lost in the same way at the time his house was burned, and so there are collections of neither Taylor nor Harrison.

"We have the papers of Franklin Pierce, such as they are. They are not many and they do not amount to much."

**Jackson Tells of Duels.**

In looking over the papers of the presidents Mr. Hunt showed me some interesting letters. I saw papers of Andrew Jackson relating to his duels and as to how he raced horses. There is one memorandum made by Andrew Jackson as a boy which gives full details of "how to feed a cock before you fight it." This says that you should give the chicken some picked beef cut fine, three times a day, and let him have sweet milk instead of water to drink. Give him dry Indian corn and a little white bread soaked in sweet milk. Feed him as much as he can eat for eight days, and he will then be ready to fight."

I saw also receipts signed by Jackson showing that he was a good churchgoer while he was president. He rented pews in three different churches and probably took the whole family with him. Mr. Hunt tells me, however, that Andrew Jackson did not stop racing horses when he became president. He merely raced them under another name. The last thing he did as president was to make a bet about Van Buren's election. He never composed a single state paper that went out under his own name. Such things were written for him by Edward Livingston, Amos Kendall, James K. Polk and others. They wrote more strongly than they would have written for themselves but Jackson was never afraid to take the responsibility.

**Colonial History Collection.**

The Library of Congress has under way a most important undertaking in collecting the material for colonial history. This is the having copied everything in the European archives which pertains to the American colonies. For some years men have been at work in the government archives of Great Britain, France, Spain and Mexico. They are copying government documents, letters and papers of all kinds relating to the story of America and to the American colonies. The most of the English transcripts have already been made. They begin with the discovery of America and extend to the peace of 1783. They number more than 200,000 folios and the copying has been all done by hand on a handmade paper manufactured especially for the purpose. The writing is like copper plate, and as the papers are chronologically arranged any period is easily accessible. These papers are in great ledger-like volumes, beautifully bound and so made that they will last forever.

Mr. Hunt tells me that the collection from the British archives is practically complete. Similar work is going on in Paris, where the copyists are collecting everything up to the time of the Louisiana purchase, in 1803, and similar copies will be made of the archives of Mexico up to the year 1847, when Texas and other states became American. The work in Spain will continue up to 1819, when Florida was bought, so that the collection will form a complete transcript of all the important documents pertaining to the American colonies now hidden away in the archives of foreign governments. As it is now, the man who wants to write about colonial America has to go to Europe for apart of his material. Within a very short time a copy of everything in Europe will be accessible in the national library.

During my chat with Mr. Hunt I asked as to the other great manuscript collections of the world. He replied:

**Other Great Collections.**

"There are only three really great historical collections, that of the British Museum in London, the Bibliotecque Nationale in Paris and the one we have here. I do not know which is the largest, but the British Museum has been at the job of collecting for more than 200 years, while the Parisians have been working at it even longer. Our collection began only 10 years ago, and at the present rate of progress it will soon have a larger and more complete collection than they have. We shall have more documents relating to the history of the United States than the British have relating to the history of England."

"These papers are separate and apart from our government archives, are they not?"

"Yes. These are private papers and letters. The official archives are the papers of the government. As far as they are concerned we are lamentably wanting. Not a single department of our government has all of its archives, and not one of them knows as to what it has and what it has lost. An inventory has never been taken. Indeed, there is not a country of Europe that does not keep its official documents in better shape than we do."

**Oldest Documents.**

"What is the oldest official document in existence?"

"It is not so very, very old. People did not begin to write until modern times, and the earliest written English document dates back only to the thirteenth century. The first English author who wrote was Chaucer. He lived in the fourteenth century, and that is not long ago. The earliest modern official document in any language is in the archives at Milan, Italy. This was written on parchment paper about A. D. 823 by king Otho and queen Agatha. There is another document written just a little later in the archives of Dresden, and another in those of Magdeburg."

"Tell me something about the vatican collection?"

"The vatican is a library of itself. It is composed exclusively of manuscripts —that is, of manuscript books written mostly before the age of printing. These books are chiefly religious and are not individual manusmripts. The vatican has the oldest written manuscript. It long antedates the oldest official document which, as I have said, was of the ninth century. The oldest piece of writting on paper dates back to the second century, and there is one from the third century. Both of these are in a perfect state of preservation. One of them is a copy of some of Virgil's poems, and the other is a transcript of prayer.

"In addition to the vatican library, Italy has a number of other valuable manuscript collections. The library of Florence has the papers of Galileo, most of which were written before he went blind and a few afterward. In the archives there they have also the papers of Dante. I have seen them all and they are wonderfully preserved."













# How a Submarine Cable Is Laid

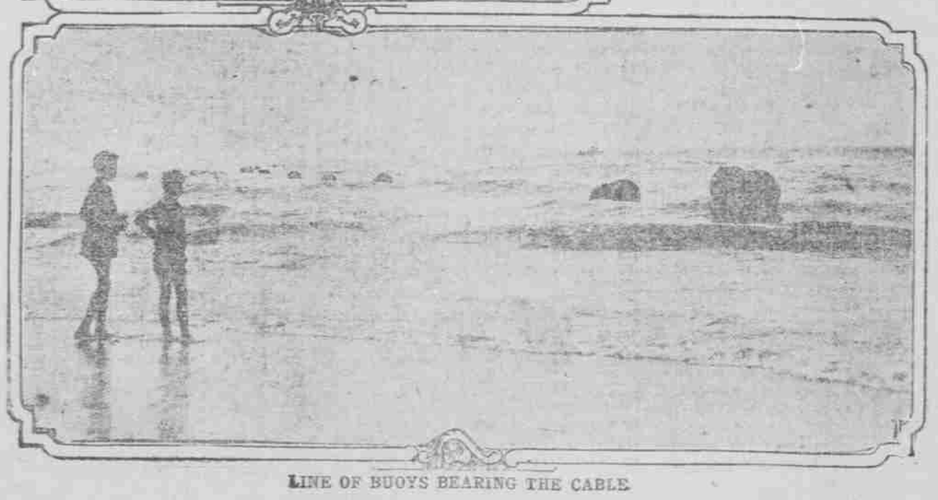
COMPLETING THE LAYING OF THE CABLE

These unusual photographs show the completion of the laying of a submarine cable.

The top picture shows a pit where the end of the cable is to be attached to the land wires, while the bottom picture shows the end of the cable being brought to shore by buoys.

The cable in this picture was being laid from Germany to England.

The wire rope through which thousands of messages will flash daily was brought across the water by the steamship Stephan, as shown in the picture, until Muadesley-on-Sea, the English end of the cable was reached.



LINE OF BUOYS BEARING THE CABLE

## Busy Steamship Official Lifts Flat Life's Curse

New York, Oct. 25.—It remained for one of New York's busiest of business men to lift the heaviest curse of flat life in New York, said curse consisting of the raucous, scratchy and metallic tones of innumerable phonographs, indulging in mingled grand opera, ragtime and yodeling.

An official of one of the big trans-Atlantic steamship companies, while endeavoring to soften the tones of an instrument purchsed for the entertainment of his children, discovered that a thin disc, attached to the needle near the point and held in place by delicate springs, not only increased the volume of the sound but retained its original purity of tone.

When the device was brought to the attention of the scientists who are laboring with this subject, they became enthusiastic about it and discovered a variety of technical advantages in it that the inventor himself had not realized. They immediately dubbed the invention the "masterphone," and summed up their approval in the statement that it makes the phonograph human.

If it accomplishes that feat, or even if it makes it cease to be inhuman, the modest inventor will earn the thanks of a million, more or less, city flat dwellers for having removed one of the prolific causes of crime and insanity—to say nothing of profanity.



## Testifiss Against Her Mother

Miss Dorothy Ainsworth Eaton, the prettty young daughter of Mrs. Jennie May Harrison Eaton, who was called to the stand to testify against her mother at the latter's trial for the alleged poisoning of her husband, the late rear admiral Eaton. Miss Eaton admitted that her mother was angered by Eaton the day before he died.